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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday - March 29, 1944

Subject: "CHEESE" Information from food distribution officials of the United States Department of Agriculture.

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Have you had trouble buying cheese lately...and have you wondered why? The cheese story is an interesting one...let's look at it for a few minutes.

First of all...you probably know that cheese is one of the best foods to send our men in uniform overseas, and our Allies. You see, cheese is compact and nourishing. It keeps well. A pound of cheese doesn't take up much room in a ship... but gives a lot of food value and flavor to a soldier in Italy or the Central Pacific. Cheese doesn't melt or freeze, but stays a firm, appetizing consistency. In food value, cheese is like fluid milk, but takes up less space. As you know, it has protein, fat, some Vitamin A and minerals.

That's why the War Food Administration decided that a bigger share of cheese should go to our Armed Forces...a bigger share partly because we expect to have many more men overseas by year's end, and more men means more food.

Our servicemen and women will have one out of every six pounds of cheese. The War Food Administration says we civilians will get more than half the total supply. Then the remaining cheese will go to our Allies, our territories, and the Red Cross. The Red Cross includes cheese in its weekly packages for prisoners of war.

But the problem of getting enough cheese for our war needs is more than just a question of dividing up the expected supply. The War Food Administration must make sure there's enough cheese to carry out the budget, and meet essential military and civilian needs. Enough milk must be produced and channeled to the cheese factories ...and that's one reason why many cities have a milk control program...and why the Government asked us not to drink more fluid milk than we drank last June. By the way, last June we drank more milk than ever before, so it's not much of a hardship

for most of us.

At the same time, the Government also cut the sale of cream and cottage cheese to three-fourths what it was in June. That was so we'd have more milk for making the war essential dairy products like cheese and butter.

So the milk control program helped channel the fluid milk to the cheese factories. But still there was the problem of all the different kinds of cheese. You know from your own home-making experience that some kinds of cheese are less useful than others. And that's very important when we send cheese to our men on the fighting fronts. We must send a cheese that tastes good, takes little shipping space, keeps well, and has the most food value. And the kind that takes the prize for all these things is good old American cheddar cheese...and we're meeting most of our war needs with cheddar.

But too much milk has gone to factories making other higher-types of cheese... and we were in danger of not having enough cheddar cheese to meet essential needs. So a few months ago the War Food Administration issued an order preventing cheese manufacturers from making more of the other kinds of cheese then they made in 1942.

The new order means you won't see as many different varieties of cheese in the grocerystore. Instead a soldier or sailor on some farflung battle front will get a good hunk of American cheese. Meanwhile, you'll still be able to buy American cheddar cheese in most stores.

For civilians will each have a bit more than four pounds of cheese in 1944... mostly cheddar. That averages out to about as much as we've been buying with our ration stamps since last summer. It's not enough to be careless with...but we're all taking cheese more seriously now anyway. Before the war...a hunk of cheese would turn up along with pie, an extra on top of an already-filling meal. But now, with greater demands on cheese and other protein foods, we need to get the most good out of all the cheese we have. Let's stop thinking of cheese as a trimming or extra tidbit. Cheese is a food to build the meal around.

Macaroni and cheese, Welsh rabbit, cheese souffle, and cheese fondue are all healthbuilding main dishes. Waste no cheese...use every bit of it. Cut off only as much as you need each time...then store the rest in a cold place, tightly wrapped in paper or a clean cloth. Use the rest before the cheese has a chance to dry out.

And here's another thing to remember. Cheese isn't "spoiled" because mold has grown on it. Cut off the mold, and use the rest of the cheese.

Now about cooking. Cheese is temperamental...if cooked wrong it gets tough and leathery, because of its protein. The secret of cheese cookery is...low heat. Cook cheese at a low temperature...over water or in a slow oven. And whenever you can, combine cheese by first blending it into a sauce. For example, in making macaroni and cheese, you can melt the cheese in a white sauce, then pour the sauce over the macaroni. Welsh rabbit won't curdle if you first mix the cheese into white sauce and then combine with the eggs. To speed up the melting and blending of cheese, break it, grate, or slice it into small pieces.

In any case...let's learn to make the most of the fine cheese flavor and food value, and when we serve cheese, let's use it as an important part of our meals. For cheese is an important fighting food all over the world...and we must use our share wisely.

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